



Request for Project Proposals

**Due September 21, 2006
5:00 p.m. ET**

Involving Volunteers in Publicly Funded ESL Programs



ProLiteracy America
1320 Jamesville Ave.
Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 422-9121, ext. 356
www.proliteracy.org

ProLiteracy America requests proposals to serve as one of three pilot sites for an 18-month project funded by The UPS Foundation. The project runs from October 2006 through March 2008.

Eligible applicants must be publicly funded ESL (English as a second language) programs that want to involve volunteers to help provide instruction or support instructional activities for lower-level adult ESL students. Applicants will receive \$20,000 over the course of the project to implement a model for recruiting and managing volunteers. They will measure the impact of volunteer involvement on the number of students served as well as changes in hours of instruction, retention, learner gains, learner goal completion, or number of students who advance an NRS level.

Applications are due in ProLiteracy America's office by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on September 21, 2006. Late submissions will not be accepted. Send the attached proposal to Jennifer Thornton at jthornton@proliteracy.org or mail it to her at ProLiteracy America.

Only proposals that use the format outlined in this application will be reviewed. The application and the forms are also available in Word and as PDFs on the Web at

<http://www.proliteracy.org/downloads/AppForms.doc>
<http://www.proliteracy.org/downloads/AppForms.pdf>
<http://www.proliteracy.org/downloads/RFP.doc>
<http://www.proliteracy.org/downloads/RFP.pdf>

ProLiteracy America & The UPS Foundation Involving Volunteers in Publicly Funded ESL Programs October 2006 to March 2008

Project Overview

Publicly funded adult education programs are increasingly challenged to serve greater numbers of lower-level ESL learners than ever before. Often, however, there aren't sufficient resources to hire the staff needed to meet the demand for instruction or provide the other support services needed to serve this population. As a result, many potential students don't even try to enroll. When they do, they may sit on waiting lists for months. Programs also struggle to provide the individualized instruction or extra practice these students often need. Consequently, many students who *do* enroll leave before achieving meaningful English-language gains. [Note: The term "lower-level ESL students" as used in this RFP refers to students at the following National Reporting System Functioning Levels: Beginning ESL Literacy, Low Beginning ESL, and High Beginning ESL. For a description of these levels, go to www.nrsweb.org/reports/NewESLdescriptors.pdf.

Many ESL programs are beginning to involve volunteers in both instructional and support roles to help meet these challenges. Examples of these roles include: tutors, mentors, classroom aides, recruiters, advisors, mini-course teachers, conversation group facilitators, translators, public speakers, etc. With sufficient planning, training, and support, volunteers can offer a unique, cost-effective way to expand and improve services to lower-level ESL learners in an efficient and effective manner.

This project is funded by a grant from The UPS Foundation's Community Literacy Initiative. Through this grant, ProLiteracy is seeking to build on current knowledge and practices in volunteer management to help adult education providers:

- Increase their capacity to serve the growing and currently underserved population of lower-level ESL learners
- Improve student outcomes for lower-level ESL learners

As part of the project, ProLiteracy has identified and described promising practices in use by ten publicly-funded ESL programs that are effectively involving volunteers to improve services to lower-level ESL learners. Examples of these practices include:

- Collaborate with a nearby university clearinghouse or service center that can help recruit and supervise student volunteers
- Develop a special training for teachers and other staff on how to work with volunteers
- Develop a volunteer handbook for the program
- Recruit volunteers to teach concurrent small groups under the supervision of a master teacher
- Use free online courses as part of the volunteers' orientation and training
- Create a committee of volunteers to help increase coordination between local service providers
- Centralize training and recruitment but have local sites manage volunteers
- Develop an online manual with all forms needed to manage volunteers

- Include job shadowing as part of the volunteers' training

ProLiteracy has also created a model showing the general program components necessary to manage volunteers. These components include recruitment, orientation, training for volunteers and the staff they will work with, support, tracking of volunteer contributions, and evaluation of the impact on services to students.

For the period from October 2006 through March 2008, ProLiteracy America will work with three pilot sites that will implement this model and use or adapt selected promising practices to meet local needs. Each pilot site will receive \$20,000 over the course of the project to develop and implement its plan and document the impact.

Measurable Project Outcomes

By the end of the project, the pilot sites will be expected to demonstrate the following measurable outcomes for lower-level ESL students involved in this project:

- An increase of at least 15% in the number of students served over the number served at the start of the project
- An average increase of at least 10% in the amount of progress made by students involved in the project (compared to what lower-level ESL students are currently achieving) as measured by standardized tests
- An average increase of at least 10% in two of the following areas:
 - Hours of instruction attended
 - Length of stay in the program
 - Learner goal completion
 - Number of students who advance an NRS level
- Evidence that at least 75% of the participating volunteers in each pilot site are satisfied or more than satisfied with the program's volunteer management
- Evidence that at least 75% of program staff members are satisfied or more than satisfied with the program's addition of a volunteer component supporting its ESL services

Project Timeline

Participation in the project will require each pilot site to send two representatives to three project meetings. Pilot sites will participate in monthly project calls and maintain regular communications with project staff. They will also submit activity and outcome reports every six months. Each site will receive a minimum of two visits from project staff. Expenses for all required travel will be paid by ProLiteracy.

The project has three phases:

1. October – December 2006. Training and Planning

This phase will include a meeting on October 26-27 in Syracuse, New York, to introduce pilot representatives to the model, the promising practices, and their responsibilities as pilot sites. Pilots will develop plans and budgets, assemble baseline data, and work with an outside evaluator to set up a data tracking process for the project. The ProLiteracy project manager will make one visit to each program to

provide consultation and technical assistance. Pilots will receive the first \$10,000 of their grants upon approval of their plans and budgets.

2. January 2007 – January 2008. Implement Plans and Evaluate Effectiveness

In this phase, pilots will provide staff training and implement their plans. They will attend a second group meeting at a location to be announced and will participate in a symposium at the ProLiteracy Worldwide Conference in October 2007 in Washington, DC. Pilots will provide semiannual project reports in March and October 2007. The second installment of \$5,000 will be paid upon receipt of the October report and approval of a plan for the time remaining in the project. The ProLiteracy project manager and an outside evaluator will make a minimum of one visit to each site.

3. February – March 2008. Summative Evaluation, Reporting, and Dissemination

Pilots will complete a final report summarizing the impact of the project on programs, volunteers, and students and relating findings to the adult education field as a whole. The third installment of \$5,000 will be paid upon receipt by ProLiteracy of the final report and the information required to disseminate project findings.

Project Requirements

Only programs that meet the following criteria will be considered:

- Is an adult education program that:
 - Delivers instruction primarily through classes taught by paid instructors
 - Receives most of its funding from federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and state education grants
 - Uses the National Reporting System (NRS) to measure outcomes
- Currently does not use volunteers to deliver or support instruction but has already begun discussions about doing so or has done some initial planning for involving volunteers
- Provides instructional services to at least 50 lower-level ESL students.
- Is willing to make an on-going commitment to the use of volunteers to help provide instruction and support services.
- Can assign a staff person to coordinate volunteer management services during the period of the grant. (Person may have other roles in program.)
- Can supply baseline data on the number of lower-level ESL students currently served and the amount of progress those students are making as measured by standardized test scores.
- Be able to send two agency representatives to attend three group meetings. One of the attendees must be the person who will be responsible for volunteer management.
- Pilot projects will sign a working agreement with ProLiteracy outlining project roles and responsibilities.

Only complete applications will be forwarded to the proposal review committee. No handwritten or faxed proposals will be accepted. The proposal should utilize one-inch margins and a minimum 12-point font size.

Application Timeline

Project proposals are due on September 21st, by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time in ProLiteracy's office. You may e-mail, mail, or hand deliver your proposal. If you e-mail the proposal, please send the original of the signature page by regular mail.

September 21, 2006	Proposals due
September 29, 2006	Programs notified
October 26-27, 2006	Training in Syracuse

Project questions should be directed to: Linda Church, Project Supervisor ProLiteracy America 1320 Jamesville Ave. Syracuse, NY 13210 (315) 422-9121, ext. 356 lchurch@proliteracy.org	Applicants must send completed proposals to: Volunteers in ESL Project c/o Jennifer Thornton ProLiteracy America 1320 Jamesville Ave. Syracuse, NY 13210 jthornton@proliteracy.org
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Proposal and Evaluation Guidelines

Applications will be reviewed using the following criteria and points:

I. COVER SHEET (10 Points)

II. PROJECT NARRATIVE (maximum of four pages)

The following questions should be answered in the order presented.

A. Program Background (not to exceed two pages) (20 Points)

1. Put the name of your program at the top. Tell when it was founded and give a brief history of how it has changed in the last five years,
2. What instructional opportunities (class or small-group instruction, one-to-one tutoring, independent study in a computer lab, individual group instruction, conversation groups, supplemental or short-term classes on topics of interest to the students, field trips, etc.) does your program provide to lower-level ESL students? Approximately how many students are participating in multiple learning opportunities?
3. What are your program's strengths and what areas would you like to improve?
4. Provide two to three examples of how you have used the data you collect to make changes in your program.

B. Project Need (20 points)

1. Why does your program want to involve volunteers?
2. Has your program ever tried to involve volunteers? If so, explain what worked well and what did not.
3. What ideas do you have at this time for involving volunteers to help meet your program's needs?

C. Organizational Capacity (20 points)

1. Describe your program's capacity to involve volunteers. Explain what organizational resources (staff, relationships with other community organizations, etc.) you can draw on to help you recruit, orient, train, support, and track volunteers.
2. Please list two to three recent grant-funded projects and/or community collaborations in which your program has participated. **Briefly** describe the planning, implementation, and evaluation work you did for one of the projects.

D. Evaluation and Tracking Capacity (15 points)

1. What types of data does your program currently track for lower-level ESL students?
Examples:
 - Hours of instruction received
 - Hours of independent study done outside of the program
 - Length of time in the program
 - Reason for leaving the program
 - Amount of progress based on a standardized test
 - Amount of progress based on individual student goals
 - Student participation in areas other than receiving instruction (recruitment, public speaking, special events, etc.)

2. Are there any outcomes that your program plans to track in addition to those listed in the proposal?
3. Do you currently assess staff and student satisfaction? If so, how?

III. PROPOSED PROGRAM BUDGET (15 points)

In this section, describe how your program currently plans to use the \$20,000 pilot site grant. Indicate the approximate amount you think you will spend on each item listed on the Project Budget form. Note that you will be asked to create a more detailed budget as part of the planning process if your program is accepted as a pilot site.

ProLiteracy does not require matching funds for this project.

Checklist:

These items must be included with your application

- Cover Sheet
- Project Narrative (no more than four pages)
- Project Budget (please use form provided)

All grants submitted to ProLiteracy America become the property of the organization.

THANK YOU!